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SUBJECT: CONSOLIDATION EFFORTS IN NARINO PROMPTS FARC THREAT

REF: BOGOTA 2787

CLASSIFIED BY: Mark Wells, Political Counselor; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C/NF) The Colombian National Police (CNP) obtained on August 22 a Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) 29th Front pamphlet declaring all social projects under the GOC's National Consolidation Plan (PNC) military targets. The CNP has reviewed the communique and believes it to be authentic. The Coordination Center for Integrated Action (CCAI) is taking the document seriously and believes the threat is specific to municipalities along the Narino coast. Staff from the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office said GOC security forces are not addressing criminal bands in Narino's rural areas. The CNP has issued security recommendations to CCAI. End summary.

FARC THREATEN SOCIAL PROJECTS IN NARINO

¶2. (U) On August 22, the CNP obtained a pamphlet with a communique issued by the FARC's 29th Front (see reftel). The communique calls the people of Narino to close ranks to defend the territory against the "criminal interests of the market economy, supported by the democratic security policy, through the insolent penetration of foreign investors." The communique further declares that all programs that are part of the PNC, Presidential Directive 001, called the "Strategic Leap," are valid military targets, and includes all international, national, and local projects.

THREAT AIMS TO PROTECT ILLICIT CROPS

¶3. (C) A recent CNP report indicates that the form and content of the communique is largely consistent with other FARC-emitted documents and is similar with other intimidation campaigns against

government alternative development programs in departments such as Norte de Santander. However, the CNP feels it is unusual for the FARC to publicly and blatantly threaten civilian organizations and activities, suggesting that the origin of the pamphlet is tied to narcotrafficking groups and aims to cripple eradication activities.

14. (C) Diego Bustamante, a civilian coordinator at CCAI, told us that the GOC is taking the document and its threats seriously. The document has been reviewed at high levels of the CNP, local military commands, the General Command, and the Joint Intelligence Command. Bustamante said that security measures in Narino are always difficult and are constantly being reviewed at all levels. He added that consolidation activities have regularly been seen by illegal armed groups as a threat to their illicit activities, territorial influence and means of financing. Bustamante believes the communique is localized to the municipalities along the coast and upper Mira river area and not characteristic of the entire department. He agrees with the CNP assessment that the FARC document was distributed to protect illicit crops.

15. (C) The CNP has recommended that the pamphlet be distributed to and socialized with relevant personnel in Regional Coordination Centers (RCC). They suggested increased coordination between police and military that provide security for coordinators and officials of the RCCs, particularly in activities dealing with

displaced persons. The police also recommended a review of security measures at RCC facilities and a risk analysis of threat levels in each department command.

CRIMINAL BANDS OPERATE FREELY IN RURAL AREAS

16. (C/NF) The Early Warning System (EWS) analyst in Narino from the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office -- responsible for overseeing the protection of civil and human rights in Colombia -- told us they also believe the threat is real and ordered directly by the FARC secretariat. The analyst said that the military -- army and marines -- are focused on attacking the FARC and leave emerging criminal bands (BACRIM) to the CNP. The CNP in turn, does not have the capacity to conduct operations in rural zones against the BACRIM and stay garrisoned in the municipal capitals. In some municipalities, the EWS analyst says that the police and military deny that there is a problem despite the 200-300 members of illegally armed groups that the EWS has registered in those municipalities. Because of poor security, GOC officials from CCAI often arrive in intervention zones in the light armored vehicles of marines, adding to the militarized image of consolidation.

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